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LOCATING NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

IN RED RIVER PARISH, LOUISIANA

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## Contents

Preliminary Considerations.....	1
The Concept of Neighborhoods and Communities ....	2
Description of Parish .....	4
Description of Neighborhoods and Communities ....	9
Method of Procedure in Delineation .....	23

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PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Communities and neighborhoods of Red River Parish in Louisiana have now been delineated. The method used is here set forth in a report that has a three-fold purpose: (1) To show by means of a map and written descriptions the actual arrangement of the communities and neighborhoods in the parish, (2) to lay down an area basis for organizing representative planning committees, and (3) to describe in some detail the procedure used in their delineation. It is hoped that such descriptions will prove helpful in other parishes selected for intensive work in land use planning.

The work of locating natural social groupings is coming to be recognized as a logical and necessary preliminary step to the successful organization of a county for land use planning. It affords a basis for democratic committee representation and for the determination of satisfactory meeting places and thus stimulates a wider and more active participation in cooperative planning work.

This report will be of primary interest to those engaged in the promotion of the land use planning program, but the recognition of existing communities and neighborhoods should be of value to all agricultural agencies, as a means of assisting them in accomodating their programs to the local areas in which they are working.



## THE CONCEPT OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

It was in 1915 that Dr. C. J. Galpin, then at the University of Wisconsin, developed the concept of the rural community which he delineated by establishing the boundaries of the area served by such agencies as the banks, stores, churches, and schools of the village center. Since that time sociologists have elaborated and perfected the techniques used to define its limits more quickly.

In recent years the establishment of various governmental programs in rural areas has brought to light the necessity of recognizing smaller units than the community and has directed attention to the natural groupings known as neighborhoods.

The neighborhood, like the family, is one of the primary social groups. It exists wherever a number of families live in close proximity to one another and are united by ties of common interest. Such ties may be varied in character and of various degrees of strength. The unity of the rural neighborhood is most frequently the outgrowth of such situations as: (1) A geographic area isolated from other areas because of rivers, mountains or absence of communicating roads, and in which the residents are of necessity thrown together for companionship and social participation; (2) a group of families most of whom attend the same church and participate in its activities; (3) an area in which the chief focus of interest is the local school attended by most of the children; (4) a group of families of similar racial origin, having the same culture, with customs which differ from those of the surrounding area; (5) a group which has had much intermarriage with a







resulting high incidence of kinship; (6) an area with a small crossroads store that furnishes a chance for local trade and informal association. In many cases more than one of these factors are in operation, and it is the number and strength of such associational ties that determines the degree of integration of the neighborhood. The chief characteristic, which is prerequisite before the area can properly be designated as a neighborhood, is that the residents must have a feeling of "belonging" and must identify themselves as members of a particular group in a particular area. This feeling of belonging is usually the product of frequent and close association over a considerable period of time.

A community usually consists of one or more neighborhoods tributary to it in some fashion. The feeling of belonging is not so strong in the residents of this larger area but it does exist, and there are ties to a common community center which are frequently almost as strong as those which bind people into neighborhoods. Often the community center is a village which offers trading facilities superior to those found in the neighborhoods. The high school may draw its students from the adjacent neighborhoods and parents of these students may cooperate in the athletic and entertainment programs; fraternal, agricultural and social organizations not represented in the smaller rural areas may function in the village; superior marketing facilities may be available; strong churches may offer more adequate or specialized services; governmental programs of relief and employment may be administered here. All these factors operate to draw the neighborhoods together in a community of interest which is focused in what is called the "community center".



Often many of these factors operate concurrently and, if this is the case, the neighborhoods may be described as "well integrated" with the inclusive community. In other instances only one or two factors may be at work, and the tie to the community center is weaker and not so definite. Less frequently it is found that the attachments are divided among several centers; children may attend high school at one center, their parents may do most of their trading at another and may attend agricultural meetings at still a third.

In the delineation of community areas no arbitrary or infallible criteria can be used to determine the alignment of neighborhoods. This relationship may involve a number of factors, no one of which can be considered as invariably more effective than the others. In most cases it will be found that because of the dominance of one factor, or the cumulative strength of several, the attachment of the neighborhood to a particular center is clearly distinguishable. As the observer travels about the county and talks to the informants he gains a conceptual pattern of community and neighborhood alignments which enable him to allocate these areas into their proper sphere of influence.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PARISH

A brief description of Red River Parish, its topography, geography, population, and type of settlement may be helpful in understanding some of the references which are made later in the descriptions of the neighborhood and community areas.





Boundaries of the parish were established in 1871 and the parish seat, Coushatta, was incorporated in 1872. Settlement in the area had been going on since 1840, chiefly as a result of navigation upon the Red River between Natchitoches and Shreveport. Growth of the population, which had been constant, was greatly stimulated by the discovery of the Red River oil field in 1913, and by 1930 the population had reached 16,078. In 1937 it had declined to 14,642 but the 1940 Census shows an increase to 15,859, a large part of which is attributable to the gain in the population of the parish seat, Coushatta. The race distribution (1930) is 52.5 percent white and 47.5 percent Negro.

The three principal sources of income are agriculture, oil, and lumber. In 1935 the parish had a total of 2,972 farms, comprising 63.6 percent of the 256,000 acres in the parish. Oil production, which is well stabilized, was 340,000 barrels; and almost 8 million feet of timber was cut, 83 percent of which was from second-growth pine for use as pulpwood.

Topography of the parish is such that it has an important influence on the type of farming and, therefore, on the form of settlement which governs the community organization. The entire length of the parish is traversed some 10 to 12 miles from its western boundary by the paved highway to Shreveport on the north. This highway is paralleled closely by the railroad. Approximately a mile west of the highway is a well-defined escarpment and the land drops to the Red River bottoms. This level area extends 4 to 5 miles across the river to the western



# NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES OF RED RIVER PARISH, LOUISIANA



----- Neighborhood boundaries  
 ————— Community boundaries





boundary of the parish, formed by Bayou Pierre. The land east of this sharp line of demarcation is gently rolling hill land, typical of north Louisiana, while that to the west is alluvial soil, with a topography identical with that of the Mississippi Delta. This 30-mile strip is also bisected by a paved highway which is paralleled by a railroad. In effect the parish is thus divided into two greatly differing areas, with the only access from one to the other the bridge at Coushatta.

Type of farming in the upland section is that of north Louisiana; small farms individually owned and operated are the rule, and the principal crops are cotton and corn, with a strong tendency toward subsistence farming. The proportion of Negroes in the upland area is from 10 to 20 percent. Many of them find a supplementary income in cutting and hauling the second-growth pine in which this area abounds.

The small size of the farm units and the preponderance of the white population has resulted in the establishment of many rural churches and schools. While many of the latter have been abandoned because of consolidation, a number of neighborhoods which originally developed around these institutions have survived. Some of these owe their continued existence to loyalty of the residents to an old established church; some have survived because of a high degree of kinship, and others because of the minor trading facilities of a crossroads store. As is evident in most rural areas everywhere, some of the neighborhoods show signs of gradual disintegration and decay. Modern highway facilities increasingly make available the better and more varied services found in the larger



community centers, and it is apparent that within the next decade or two many of the present neighborhoods will become indistinguishable parts of the greater community area.

On the bottomlands in the western part of the parish the situation differs greatly. Here the farms consist of cotton plantations, some of them containing from 8,000 to 12,000 acres. Operations are highly mechanized but all hand labor is performed by Negroes, either croppers or wage hands. Negroes make up 90 percent of the population.

This type of farming, plus the preponderance of Negro population, results in a quite different form of neighborhood organization, which is further influenced by the location of the highway and railroad. For convenience in shipping, gins are located on the railroad; and for greater accessibility the general stores are close by on the highway. The neighborhood center, therefore, usually consists of a railroad station, a store (which may be combined with a filling station), and a cotton gin.

Measured by the criteria that apply in the upland portion of the parish, these areas lack some of the characteristics of true neighborhoods. Their population usually consists of from 3 to 6 white families and from 150 to 250 Negro families. Under any other system this would result in definite Negro neighborhoods, integrated around a church, school, and various social organizations and trade facilities. In the plantation system, despite the numerical superiority of the Negroes, economic dominance is held by the whites and this governs to a large degree the societal structure. The stores were originally, and are still to a great extent, only "furnish" stores or commissaries for the





plantation hands, and the goods they offer are limited to actual necessities instead of the variety which would be required under a competitive system. The trading done there is frequently from necessity rather than from choice. This does not operate to build up a great amount of loyalty to the store as a neighborhood institution. Negro elementary schools are administered by white officials, short terms are the rule, and the interest and cooperation normally found in Negro neighborhoods elsewhere is lacking. Even the Negro churches, that ordinarily act as the chief integrating factor in a Negro area of settlement, function irregularly because of the low financial status of their membership. Their importance as a focus of neighborhood interest is proportionately weakened.

Probably the chief factor lacking is the feeling of "belonging" to a particular neighborhood. The absence of this feeling would alone be sufficient to prevent such areas from being accurately and truthfully characterized as neighborhoods. In the absence of integrating factors in the neighborhood area this feeling of "belonging" is transferred to the "big house", that is, the headquarters of the plantation owner, and the loyalty which ordinarily would attach to neighborhood institutions is directed to the plantation. As an integral part of this loyalty, a strong feeling of dependence upon the "big house" for economic security exists. It is debatable whether lack of other strong integrating neighborhood interests such as school, church, social organizations, and stores induces the tie to the plantation, or whether loyalty to the plantation and economic dependence upon it are responsible for the failure of normal neighborhood development. Irrespective of which is cause and which effect, the situation exists.



These factors operate only in connection with the Negro population, but another applies no less cogently to the white families. The dearth of white population effectually prevents the maintenance of social organizations, churches, schools or any of the formal or informal activities usually found in neighborhood areas, and without these the "we" feeling fails to develop. It should be emphasized that this situation is not the result of any lack of desire for neighborly association or from antisocial attitudes; it exists because of numbers insufficient to permit functioning as a neighborhood group.

On the accompanying map the plantation area has been divided into so-called "neighborhoods" but it should be understood that these boundaries are more or less arbitrarily arrived at. They represent groupings of people united by bonds of common interest, mutual helpfulness, neighborly association and cooperative endeavor to a much smaller degree than is the case in the upland area of the parish. Actually they reflect geographic areas comprising one or more large plantations, in which these attributes are largely lacking.

#### DESCRIPTION OF NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

The following descriptions are intended for use in conjunction with the accompanying map. They indicate briefly the community and neighborhood areas in the parish as found by following the procedure outlined later in this report. The descriptions are largely factual, but in most cases an attempt has been made to point out the factors which cause the neighborhoods to be so designated and to indicate the chief influences which render them tributary to a certain community.





It should be emphasized that neighborhood alignments are not static and that maps showing such delineations should not be regarded as permanent. Highways may change; schools may be consolidated; new churches may be established or old ones abandoned; new communities offering more and better services may arise; and the allegiance of a neighborhood to a certain community center may shift to another because of these or other reasons. The accompanying map shows the situation as it exists today -- those who use it are advised to be prepared to recognize and incorporate such changes as may be required from time to time.

#### Hall Summit Community

The village which serves as a center for this community area is situated on a high ridge overlooking the surrounding country; Hall Summit Community is second in importance in Red River Parish only to the parish seat, Coushatta. Although no railroad facilities are present and the community is served only by gravel roads, the absence of any competing village within a considerable distance has enabled it to keep its favorable position as a trade center for the northern part of the parish for approximately the last 70 years.

For trade and service facilities Hall Summit has three general stores, a garage, grist mill, two cotton gins, and a post office. There is a resident medical doctor. An excellent eight-grade elementary school and high school combined brings in students by bus from a large surrounding territory, and two white churches (in addition to those for Negroes), each with full-time services and a full complement of auxiliary organizations, function actively. A variety of other organizations furnish



ample means for social participation of the residents; the school has a full program of athletic and entertainment activities and sponsors a Parent-Teacher Association with monthly meetings. Besides the Home Demonstration Club and Community Club, the Masons, Eastern Star, and Woodmen are represented, each with their regular meetings and social events.

The land in the area is regarded as somewhat above the average of the hill land in the parish, and the percentage of tenancy is not high. Negroes make up approximately one-fourth of the population; many of these earn a supplementary income by cutting pulpwood in the wooded areas in the south part of the area comprising the community.

Apparently Hall Summit may be termed "typical" of the upland area. Trade facilities (except for the more expensive items, which may be found at Coushatta) are ample for the trade territory, agricultural services for ginning and marketing cotton are available, educational and religious facilities are adequate, and chances for social participation are not too limited. A strong feeling of community consciousness exists and the two tributary neighborhoods of Mt. Zion and Social Springs share in this feeling.

These two neighborhoods are quite similar, the integrating factor in each being an old established Baptist Church; church services are held twice monthly in each neighborhood. Neither neighborhood offers much in the way of trade facilities, the Mt. Zion area having no stores. Both send their children to grade and high school at Hall Summit via bus. Each neighborhood has an active Home Demonstration Club, but aside from this



most of the associational ties are with Hall Summit. In Mt. Zion particularly, a high degree of kinship is found, many of the descendants of the original settlers having intermarried and remained in the vicinity. In both of these neighborhoods the tie to Hall Summit as a community center is strengthened by the factors of trade, school attendance, geographical juxtaposition, and a good connecting road.

#### Methvin Community

Whether Methvin should be considered as a community or as a large neighborhood within the Hall Summit area is a debatable question. Several factors indicate the latter. Trade facilities are inadequate, and Methvin depends on Hall Summit for the ginning of cotton and for doctors' services. In this case the chief determining factor is the school situation which integrates the area rather effectively as a relatively independent unit. Methvin has a splendid elementary and high school plant, which continues to function despite the efforts of Hall Summit toward absorption or consolidation. Its athletic and other activities form one of the chief means of social participation.

A Baptist Church with an average attendance of 60 has services monthly, but much of the attendance from the area goes to Hall Summit or to Holley Springs to the south. Because of the large number of families (approximately 250) Methvin has two active Home Demonstration Clubs; and the Community Club, which meets in its own building, reports an increasing amount of interest and participation. The Parent-Teachers Association has recently been disbanded, possibly due to a feeling that some of its activities were being duplicated by other organizations.





Considerable kinship is found but the struggle to maintain the separate identity of the school acts as the chief unifying agency in the area and induces a strong solidarity among the residents. Some of these privately admit that it might be a good idea to join with Hall Summit and thus enable their children to take advantage of the superior educational program available in the high school there.

The two Negro neighborhoods in the northeastern corner of the parish, centering around St. Mary's and St. Matthew's Churches, may be regarded as tributary to the Methvin Community, mainly because of the minor trading facilities with which they are connected by the one good road.

#### Martin Community

This area comprises practically the entire east central part of the parish and is bisected by State Highway No. 9, the gravel road leading to Ashland in the next parish.

Like Methvin, its distinguishing feature and integrating factor is the school. By gradually extending its bus routes and taking in more and more territory, the Martin school system has absorbed all the rural schools for a considerable distance in every direction. In order to serve this added territory more adequately, a new modern plant was built during the last year. The curriculum includes both Home Economics and Vocational Agriculture.

The Martin area contains approximately 200 families, of which 10 to 15 percent are Negro. No pronounced concentration is found at any point and this dispersion is probably responsible for the lack of organizational activity. Although the area has a Home Demonstration



Club, the school has no Parent-Teachers Association; efforts to keep a Community Club alive were unsuccessful; and an abortive attempt to establish a branch of the Farmers' Union was also a failure.

Strong loyalty to the school is evident, as is allegiance to the two churches, one of which holds its meetings at the school while planning a new building. Trade facilities are meagre, consisting of three small stores, and a considerable amount of buying is done at Coushatta, which is conveniently reached by a good gravel road. Several small saw-mills operate in the heavily timbered sections and provide a small amount of work.

Martin cannot be adjudged a "strong" community in the sense of having a high degree of integration. Its four neighborhoods are tributary largely because of school attendance, and show a pronounced lack of loyalty in other respects. These neighborhoods, in order of importance are Holley Springs, Liberty, Harvey, and Carroll Creek. They may be briefly described as follows:

Holley Springs, with approximately 100 white families, lies immediately north of Martin and is connected with it by a good gravel road. The land is good, and average cotton production is close to a bale an acre. Several factors combine to make it a strongly integrated neighborhood: (1) An old established church with a loyal membership and the largest and most widely used cemetery in the eastern part of the parish, and (2) an active Masonic lodge. The church and the lodge, each with its attendant social activities, along with the amateur baseball team,





provide exceptionally adequate means of friendly association. Leadership of these activities is reported as excellent and the cooperation of the entire group is evidenced by the widespread acceptance of farm- and soil-improvement programs.

Liberty, with 40 or 50 families, dates its settlement back to the 1850's and because of the Carolina origin of its settlers is sometimes locally referred to as "Tarheel". There are two small general stores, but the school was absorbed by Martin 2 years ago and the integrating factor that remains is the old established Baptist Church which holds services monthly.

Harvey, lying south of Liberty, was never a strong neighborhood. Its 30 white families are distributed widely over a considerable area, much of it heavily wooded. It was previously known as a separate settlement because of its rural school, as it has never had a local church. Since the school was absorbed by Martin 2 years ago, thus removing the chief integrating influence, local residents are aware that in the future it will probably cease to be regarded as a separate entity and will gradually become an indistinguishable part of its neighbor, Liberty.

Carroll Creek, lying in the western part of the Martin Community is also an irregular, poorly defined area, without any strong degree of coherence. Its twenty-odd white families are scattered through a heavily wooded territory, traversed by many creeks and but few good roads. The center of activities is the old established Methodist Church where services are held once a month. Several Negroes live in



the area, some of whom are small landowners. Much of the association is with Coushatta and, while the fact of school attendance at Martin is sufficiently important to justify inclusion of Carroll Creek in the Martin Community, it might with equal justification be included in the Coushatta Community area.

#### East Point Community

The East Point Community, with the village center of the same name, is made up of a strip approximately 10 miles long and from 2 to 5 miles wide, extending from paved Highway No. 71 on the east to the Red River on the west. Except for the one neighborhood of Cross Roads the territory lies on the Red River bottoms and farming is of the plantation type. Acreages vary from 60 to 1,000, there being no extremely large plantations.

The East Point Community itself consists of approximately 150 families, some 20 of which are white, the remainder being Negro croppers or wage hands on the plantations. The village has a railroad station, post office, three stores, and a cotton gin, and constitutes a trade center for the immediate area. A Methodist Church with monthly services is one of the old institutions, and the splendid brick school building with auditorium and gymnasium brings students from the surrounding area. The Parent-Teacher Association is active. A Negro church and a Negro elementary school are also found here. The neighborhoods making up the larger community are Cross Roads, Crichton, and a small Negro settlement at the extreme north, centered around the New Era church.





Cross Roads Neighborhood lies along both sides of the paved highway almost entirely in the hill section, its western boundary coinciding with the course of Coushatta Bayou at the foot of the hills. For years it existed as a settlement known as "Loves Lake" on the old road. As its center has moved a half mile west to the new paved highway the neighborhood has lost much of its original strength and solidarity. At the cross roads intersection are three small combined stores and filling stations, but these are the only services available. Much of the local trade goes to Coushatta, 12 miles down the paved highway. The ninety-odd families are largely loyal to the old Baptist Church which has weekly services, but many are now being attracted to the newer Church of Christ. No other organizations or services are available - even the cemetery is at Mt. Zion to the east. Culturally and economically the residents have little in common with the community center at East Point and it is chiefly by reason of school attendance there that the Cross Roads neighborhood is here designated as a part of that community.

Crichton Neighborhood lies entirely on the bottomland in the plantation area and its territory is composed mainly of two or three large plantations. The population consists of 8 white and 50 to 60 Negro families. A railroad station and a plantation store which is open only at irregular intervals represent the nearest approach to a neighborhood center. No church or school is nearer than East Point, 3 miles north. A practically dormant oil field occupies part of the wooded area along the bayou but adds little to present activities or employment in the neighborhood, although in its period of prosperity it gave Crichton some prospect of developing into an active and thriving community.



Half Way and Carroll Neighborhoods. These two may well be described under one caption, as increasingly they are functioning as one neighborhood. Located from 5 to 7 miles northwest of Coushatta and bisected by the same paved highway, each lies partially in the uplands and partially on the bottomland. The combined population is approximately 150 families, of which half are Negro. Each neighborhood has one small general store; Half Way has an old established Methodist Church, Carroll has none. Both have surrendered their schools to the expanding Coushatta district. A Home Demonstration Club at Half Way also serves the Carroll residents and the Community Club which functions in the old school building is likewise a joint enterprise, although meetings are becoming more and more infrequent. The two neighborhoods, both singly and in combination, are an excellent illustration of the disintegration brought about by the loss of the focal institutions and the expansion of a large community center within 10 minutes drive over a modern highway. With almost no trade facilities, and with only one small struggling church and an apathetic community club as the chief agencies of social participation, it is likely that the end of another decade will see these neighborhoods become indistinguishable parts of the Coushatta Community.

Hickory Grove Neighborhood. This neighborhood, which was the last portion of the parish to be settled, is in a large, heavily wooded area lying some 7 miles east of Coushatta. The occupants are widely dispersed over an area of approximately 20 square miles within which the cutting of pulpwood is carried on actively. One small store operates





and a Baptist Church has meetings monthly, but the lack of services, the diffusion of population, and the availability of Coushatta for trading purposes all tend to characterize Hickory Grove as a weak neighborhood.

Union Hall Neighborhood. This is another example of neighborhood deterioration resulting from modern highway facilities and close proximity to a larger center. Situated only 5 miles southwest of Coushatta on the paved highway, the residents report that the settlement is losing its separate community consciousness and is depending more and more upon the parish seat for all its services; economic, social, and religious.

A Baptist Church functions monthly, a Home Demonstration Club under good leadership is active, and a community club occupies its own building but the "we" feeling of Union Hall residents gradually grows weaker.

Fairview-Alpha Neighborhood. Although on the paved highway, this neighborhood is far enough removed from the influence of the parish seat to retain many of its original integrating factors, and its individuality. With its area extending well into the adjoining parish, the school which acts as a center of influence for the neighborhood is located practically on the parish line and is maintained jointly by the two parishes. This modern elementary and high school brings in students from a considerable area by bus, and sponsors a full program of social and athletic activities. Three churches, one with full-time services, attract a large attendance; and a Home Demonstration Club is active. Trade facilities are limited to several combined stores and filling stations scattered along the highway, and the economic tie to Coushatta definitely identifies this neighborhood as a part of that community.



Armistead Neighborhood. As the only neighborhood designated as a part of the Coushatta Community lying across the Red River, Armistead might equally well be termed an extension of the outlying suburbs of the parish seat. Only 2 miles distant, its services and institutions have been absorbed by the larger center until, except for a filling station and two Negro churches serving the plantation employees, little is left to distinguish it as a separate neighborhood.

Hanna Community

This community, with its one tributary neighborhood of Lake End, lies west of the Red River in the heart of the plantation area and on the paved highway and railroad bisecting that area. By actual count, 22 white families and approximately 200 Negro families make up the population. The village center of Hanna has 5 general stores, a post office, a railroad station, and a cotton gin. A Baptist Church with services twice monthly, a Parent-Teachers Association and Home Demonstration Club all function for the benefit of the white population. Several small Negro churches are found in the community. Although high school pupils attend at Coushatta, Hanna has an excellent eight-grade elementary school which draws part of its attendance from Lake End to the south. Even with its many economic ties to Coushatta, the factors of trade facilities, ginning of cotton, school attendance, and organizational activities would seem to justify its designation as a separate community center for the lower end of the plantation area west of the river.



Lake End Neighborhood. Through school attendance and trade facilities this plantation area is tributary to the Hanna community center. It has no church, school, or organizational activity and services are limited to a few stores, a gin, and a railroad station. At the lower end of the area the Farm Security Administration has obtained some 1,800 acres and is settling tenants on 40-acre tracts. It is possible that in time the necessities of this group may lead to the development of some neighborhood institutions. At present the 15 resident white families are served by Hanna.

Harmon-Grand Bayou Community

This community area comprises the entire strip, some 15 miles long and 4 to 5 miles wide, lying between the Red River and Bayou Pierre, the western parish boundary. The strip is traversed from north to south by paved Highway No. 20 which is paralleled by the Texas and Pacific Railroad.

The entire area, lying on the alluvial Red River bottoms, is composed of plantations, some of them containing from 8,000 to 11,000 acres. The population is 95 percent Negro.

The 6 "neighborhoods" shown as comprising the community area and tributary to the community center of Harmon-Grand Bayou are so similar that a description of each would be repetitious. Each consists of a railroad station, a general store that is usually the plantation commissary, and a cotton gin. Each has a Negro school and one or two Negro churches; white pupils attend school and white members attend





church at the community center. As the white population consists of from three to six families in each neighborhood little possibility of social or other organizational activities exists. Those that are functioning are found only at the community center. Actually the term "neighborhood" is a misnomer if it is used in the usual sense of a natural grouping of people bound together by a feeling of belonging and a loyalty to some center of common interest. The areas shown as neighborhoods are little more than arbitrarily established geographic units consisting of one or two large plantations with the center of each consisting of nothing more than minor trading, ginning, and shipping facilities.

Because the institutions and services commonly found in a community center are divided between Grand Bayou and Harmon,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles apart on the paved highway, the unusual situation exists of a "Siamese Twin" community which, to be accurate, must be designated as "Harmon-Grand Bayou".

The cause of this separation dates back to the days of the "oil boom" when population increased and tax revenues were high. After considerable controversy the school was built near Grand Bayou, a modern brick plant capable of accomodating 500 pupils but not housing less than half that number. The two churches were located at Harmon and, with the original institutional agencies thus equally divided, the two centers have been practical enough since that time to avoid duplication in the addition of further services or facilities. The "twin" centers provide between them the school and churches above mentioned, five



general stores, a cotton gin, and a doctor's services. A Parent-Teachers Association and a Home Demonstration Club draw membership from both groups, and the residents of each, while admitting that a healthy rivalry still exists, report that old antagonisms engendered in the school fight are fast dying out and that an excellent spirit of co-operation is becoming evident.

#### METHOD OF PROCEDURE IN DELINEATION

In beginning a survey of this kind it should be understood that the information necessary for the proper delineation of neighborhood areas must come from the residents themselves. With this in mind it is easy to see that an important preliminary step is to obtain as complete a list as possible of those residents who may be presumed to be the best source of information on such matters.

This should be accomplished before going into the field, ordinarily through the cooperation of the parish agent and the personnel of the other agricultural agencies represented in the parish. Several of the "base maps" prepared by the State Highway Commission should be obtained first. These show roads, streams, churches, schools and all other useful landmarks, as well as the location of each farm house. After these maps are received it is desirable to hold a meeting with the parish agent, and the representatives of such other agencies as may be called in to assist. At this meeting the nature and purpose of the survey is first explained, and with their suggestions and advice the parish map is roughly marked into areas which are generally and popularly supposed to represent





separate settlements. No attempt is made at this stage to classify the areas either as neighborhoods or communities or to define their exact limits. The general boundaries may be roughly marked with a light red line; the chief center of interest or point of concentrated population is indicated, together with the name by which each settlement is commonly known. Each of these is given a number on the map and a separate list is prepared, showing the name and number of each area so designated.

Following this, members of the same group may be asked to suggest names of informants in each area who may reasonably be supposed to be qualified to furnish the information desired. This list is usually made up of the names of members of the parish or Agricultural Adjustment Administration committees, officers of farm organizations or Home Demonstration Clubs, vocational agriculture teachers, civic or political leaders, or citizens of long residence in the community. A complete and comprehensive list is highly desirable, not only because these people are to be the primary source of information, but because one or more may not be available for interview at the time of the visit by the field worker.

With the map and list the interviewer may now begin work in any area desired. One of the informants is visited and the nature and purpose of the survey is explained to him. As practically all the informants are on friendly and familiar terms with the agricultural personnel at the parish seat, the interviewer's entree is easily made and a cordial and informal relationship is quickly established.



With the map "squared" to correspond with the actual directions, the location of the informant's house is found on it. He is then asked to designate on the road leading north, for example, the farthest family which he considers to belong to his neighborhood and which ordinarily shares in most of its activities. This location is circled on the map, marked as No. 1, and the occupant's name recorded on the "Neighborhood Questionnaire", described on Page 29. The same procedure is followed on all roads and crossroads leading from the area, and in each case the name of the farthest or border family is numbered consecutively and listed. When all the roads are completed in this fashion, lines are drawn between points thus marked on the maps and the outer boundary of the neighborhood is established.

During the progress of the mapping an informal conversation is carried on, in which many of the following questions are answered, frequently without having been specifically asked:

Is this the name by which this neighborhood is popularly known throughout the parish? How did it originate and has it ever been known by any other?

What is the approximate area of the neighborhood and about how many families live in it?

What is the chief center of interest?

What services as stores, schools, churches, medical services, organizations, recreation, etc. are available?

What are some of the things people in this area do together, and what evidence is there of concerted activity or cooperation?



Are many of the people in this area kinfolk?

What is there about this neighborhood that sets it off and makes it distinct from any other?

What are the chief reasons people give for sticking together as a neighborhood?

What are the chief forms of informal activity?

With what other neighborhoods does this neighborhood have the most association?

To what community center do the people of this neighborhood feel most strongly attached and why?

For what things do the people here go to the community center?

What other neighborhoods have a feeling of belonging to this same community?

What larger center is most frequently visited?

What is the history of school consolidation or establishment of bus routes to the community center?

Are conflicts or antagonisms between this neighborhood and the community center apparent, and is the attachment to it growing stronger or weaker?

To what community center would the people in this neighborhood prefer to go for farm meetings?

In order to secure a permanent record of the information for possible future use the "Neighborhood Questionnaire" (a copy of which will be found at the end of this section) is used; this records the





pertinent factual information which is not directly covered in the foregoing questions, as well as the list of border families secured in the mapping process.

The interviewer now travels to an adjoining neighborhood, locates one of the informants, and repeats the procedure. Ordinarily the procedure in the second interview will be simpler than that in the first, as a part of the boundary line (that portion common to the two areas) has already been tentatively established and it is only necessary to verify the accuracy of its location through the second informant. This is done by reference to the keyed numbers on the map showing the location of the "border" families. He is told: "No. 1 on the map is where John Doe lives. Over there we were told that he is about the last man in this direction who is regarded as belonging to that neighborhood." In practically all cases the previous judgment will be verified, but if a conflict of opinion occurs one or two of the actual border families should be visited and the boundary established more accurately.

The procedure described in the foregoing paragraphs is repeated until all the neighborhoods in the parish have been delineated. So far no attempt has been made to set the boundaries of the communities. By the time all the neighborhoods have been completed the interviewer should have a thorough conception of the associational patterns which determine the grouping of neighborhoods into communities. With this knowledge and by reference to the information on school and church attendance, trade facilities, and organizational ties, which is recorded on the "Neighborhood Questionnaire", he is usually able to



determine and map the community boundaries with respect to the neighborhoods which compose them. Sometimes a community and a neighborhood may coincide, that is, the "central neighborhood", as it is called, furnishes enough in the way of institutions and services so that it may be designated as a community, although it has no tributary neighborhoods. More frequently, however, the community area consists of the community center around which are grouped a cluster 1/of tributary neighborhoods.

The final operation is the preparation of a large-scale map upon which all the communities and neighborhoods of the parish are shown and properly labeled.

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1/ Sanders, Irwin T., and Ensminger, Douglas. Alabama rural community; a study of Chilton County. Bul. 136, Alabama College in cooperation with Bur. of Agr. Econ., Montevallo, Alabama, July 1940. 80 pp.





NEIGHBORHOOD QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_ Community \_\_\_\_\_ High School \_\_\_\_\_  
Key - Border families:

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (9) \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (10) \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_ (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (11) \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) \_\_\_\_\_ (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (12) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of families in neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate date of settlement \_\_\_\_\_

3. Check the following services found in the neighborhood:

(If not in neighborhood, designate outside place where service is secured.)

a. Church:	Full	Frequency	Organizations	Average church
Denomination	time	of	Young Womans Sun- Other	Attend- Member-
	pastor?	Preaching	peoples auxil- day	ance ship
			iary School	

(1) \_\_\_\_\_  
(2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Schools: Elementary \_\_\_\_\_ High School \_\_\_\_\_  
(1) Activities \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) History and effect of consolidation \_\_\_\_\_

c. General store _____	g. Dentist _____	k. Others _____
d. Garage (repairs) _____	h. Grist mill _____	
e. Cotton gin _____	i. Burial ground _____	
f. Doctor _____	j. Theatre _____	

4. What trade center, or centers, is most frequently visited? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Organizations found in the neighborhood:

	Frequency of	Average	Frequency	Average
	meeting	attendance	of meeting	attendance
a. P.T.A. (Comm. Leag.) _____	_____	_____	e. Older youth 4-H, FFA	_____
b. Home Dem. Club _____	_____	_____		
c. Grange _____	_____	_____	Other (specify) _____	
d. Farm Bureau _____	_____	_____	f. _____	
			g. _____	

6. a. Usual place of farm meetings \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Where would people in this neighborhood prefer to attend farm meetings? \_\_\_\_\_





7. Chief reasons people give for sticking together as a neighborhood:
- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Traditional factors _____       | e. Loyalty to local school _____ |
| b. Kinship _____                   | f. Economic ties _____           |
| c. Natural boundaries _____        | g. Informal activities _____     |
| d. All belong to same church _____ | h. Same nationality _____        |
8. Comment on informal activities (visiting, loafing, parties, exchange work, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Indicate evidences of concerted activity or conflicts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Population: % Negroes \_\_\_\_\_ % Tenants \_\_\_\_\_ % Nonfarm \_\_\_\_\_  
Comment on nonfarm or part-time farm activities: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Who owns most of the land:
- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Individual farmers _____ | B. Landlords: Resident _____ |
|                             | Absentee _____               |
12. With what other neighborhoods does this neighborhood have most associations:
- (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (6) \_\_\_\_\_
- (a) What is the Community Center, if any? \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) What are chief attachments to this center? \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Describe conflicts between this neighborhood and any other \_\_\_\_\_
13. (a) Predominant type of farming \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Predominately good land \_\_\_\_\_  
Comment on nonfarm enterprise \_\_\_\_\_ Predominately poor land \_\_\_\_\_  
Av. yield of cotton per acre \_\_\_\_\_
14. Remarks and comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Quotations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. Name of informant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

